

and of collecting conditions, but the most that they say of the people in the little pueblo of Cabo San Lucas is that boys sometimes brought him specimens. That there were people there is brought out by Professor Emeritus Herbert Mason's story about his brief time ashore at Cabo San Lucas in 1925, when the California Academy of Sciences' expedition stopped there during its return trip from the Revillagigedo Islands. An elderly *paisano* who was watching while specimens were being put into a plant press remarked, "Mi papá tenía uno de estos." "Who was your papa?" "Xántus." The man couldn't have been much more than a baby at the time Xántus went from Cabo San Lucas on very short notice; so Xántus must have left more than collecting equipment behind! In 1940 when Steinbeck and Ricketts touched at Cabo San Lucas (cf. Zwinger footnote, p. 324) the manager of the cannery, pointing to three little Indian children said, "Those are Xanthuses great-grandchildren," and "in the town there is a large family of Xanthuses."

The paucity of detail about life of the people is undoubtedly due to the fact that Xántus' letters to Baird were business letters detailing progress of his work and difficulties encountered. In one letter, however, Xántus includes a list of 14 donors of scientific material. Typical of these is item No. 8, "Donnas Juana & Pachita Doderó, 10 nests, with 34 eggs, & several bottles of insects." In contrast to his usual letters is that of 28 December 1860 in which he says, "The Christmas day I spent in San Jose, amongst bullfights, cockfights, & dancing. There was a great concourse [sic] of people. . . . The whole fiesta [sic] went off however very decently & with great order, more so than a 4th of July in a small American village." His letters to his mother in Hungary were replete with exciting accounts of his expeditions and adventures—many of them undoubtedly more fancy than fact.

Ann Zwinger's introductory chapter (36 pp.) provides a biographical background for Xántus and brings out the important role that Spencer Fullerton Baird played in building up natural history collections at Smithsonian. Zwinger's copious footnotes to the letters contribute important historical data as to the identity of people mentioned in the letters as well as clarification of some of the scientific names that Xántus cited in his lists. These footnotes not only add to the interest of the book, but also make it historically valuable. An extensive bibliography of the works cited and an unusually full index add to the usefulness of this volume. Because of her long interest in and association with the Cape Region of Baja California, as evidenced by her book *A Desert Country Near the Sea*, Ann Zwinger is especially well-fitted to present this treatment of Xántus.

The Castle Press is to be complimented on a good job of printing the difficult material. This is a worthy addition to Glen Dawson's series on Baja California.—ANNETTA CARTER, Dept. of Botany, Univ. of California, Berkeley 94720.

Flora Fanerogamica del Valle de Mexico. Volumen II. Dicotyledonae (Euphorbiaceae—Compositae). Edited by JERZY RZEDOWSKI and GRACIELA C. DE RZEDOWSKI. Instituto de Ecología, Apartado Postal 18-845, Delegación Miguel Hidalgo, 11800 Mexico, D.F., Mexico. ISBN 968-7213-02-7. 1985. 674 pp. \$35? (cloth).

The valley of Mexico is thought of as an area full of people (one of the world's largest metropolitan regions) and, therefore, quite denuded of vegetation. In reality, there is a lot of plant life in the region. The Rzedowskis are in the process of producing an excellent three volume flora of this valley: Vol. I (1979) Gymnosperms and dicots up to Polygalaceae; Vol. II (1985), the remainder of the dicots, Euphorbiaceae through Compositae (here reviewed with about 1040 species treated); Vol. III, to be published, monocots.

The format is clear and very easy to use with the families arranged in an order that seems to be of the editors' design with similarities to some modern systematic treat-

ments. This volume has a hard cover and a small but clear type face, which are distinct improvements over Vol. I that was printed by a different publisher.

The families, genera, and species are described fully with economic and distributional notes at the end of the family and generic descriptions. The species are presented alphabetically within the families except for the Compositae, which are alphabetical within the tribes. The species descriptions are concise with many unique observations, and are followed by the plant's range within the area of the flora with localities and then in general terms for its total range. A statement of the habitat and associations where the plant occurs in the valley also is given.

The keys are indented and easy to use, although some couplets in the keys to large genera are very involved, use many characters, and are a little confusing. There are good drawings with habit and details of some species in all families. One would like more, but cost and space are a valid concern.

The boundaries for this flora include the slopes of all of the various sierras that form the Valley of Mexico and range up to 5452 m. A very nice byproduct of this fact is that this flora has a utility for a much wider range, as many of the plants occur at high altitudes from Durango to Oaxaca.

Throughout the work, references are cited where they are drawn upon in the preparation of the treatments. This is reflected in the conservative and usually current species concepts presented. Although there are 46 authors of various groups in this volume alone, the presentation is uniform and reflects considerable effort by the editors to accomplish this.

The Rzedowskis are to be congratulated on the completion of this volume of the flora of the Valley of Mexico, which is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the plants of Mexico and will be a useful tool for many years to come.—DENNIS E. BREEDLOVE, Dept. of Botany, California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA 94118.

A Flora of Dry Lakes Ridge, Ventura County, California. By David L. Magney, vii + 110 pp. The Herbarium, Dept. of Biological Sciences, Univ. of California, Santa Barbara, Publication No. 5, 1986. \$8.00

This botanical research results from a four year study during every month of the year. Data include details regarding soil analyses, geology, climatology, land use, floristic history, botanical resources of special concern, environmental sensitivity, and recommendations for management procedures.

The area is north of Ojai at the headwaters of the North Fork of Matilija Creek. The ridge's north flank is drained by Sespe Creek. Access is available by foot, with some difficulty, from two directions via bulldozed firebreak/trails.

The effects on the vegetation by fires during 1932, 1948, and 1985 are explained. There are two habitat groups: 1) wetlands—consisting of stream, seeps and slopes; 2) upland—basins along the ridge at the summit with finer-grained soils.

Each principal plant species is discussed as to percentage of cover and how it dominates or persists in localized areas. Post-fire vegetation is listed. Erosion control plantings are evaluated. There are five plants endemic to the general region. Paleobotanical aspects are dealt with. Fossil evidence and woodrat middens are discussed. The book concludes with an annotated catalogue of vascular plants.

There are several black-and-white illustrations of good quality. Graphs, charts, line drawings, and maps are uncomplicated and quite understandable. The text is double-spaced and easily readable. The work is well-prepared and deals with a little-known botanical area.—WALTER KNIGHT, Research Associate, The Carnegie Museum, Section of Botany, Pittsburgh, PA.